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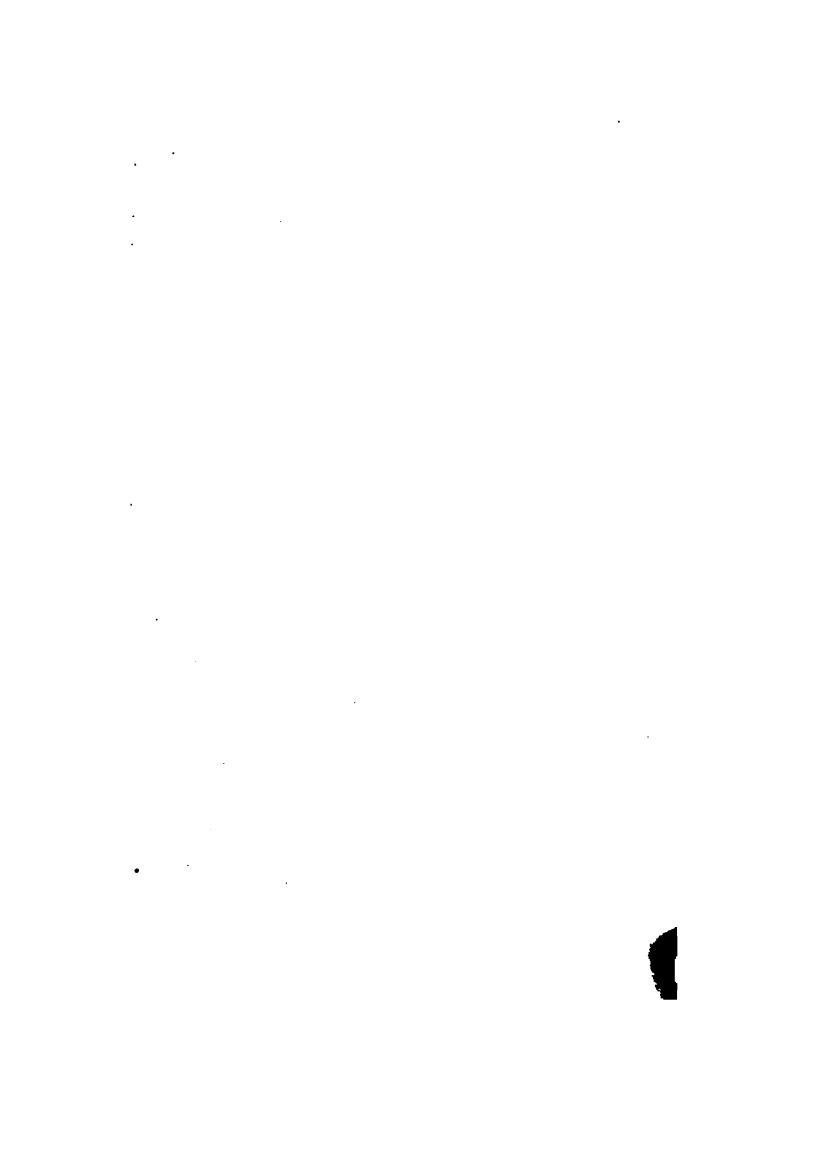
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*The Gift of
Wm Stevens Perry
of
Waterdown
(Class of 1854)
Rec^d 27 October*



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1



When HARRIET'S little friends visited her, she would sometimes take them into her chamber, and have a little meeting, singing hymns, and talking about religion. Then they would pray with them, beseeching the Lord to bless that privilege to every soul that should be for death and judgment.....pp. 15 and 65.

MEMOIR
OF
HARRIET DOW,
OF NEWPORT, N. H.

WHO BECAME A CHRISTIAN AT THE AGE OF EIGHT YEARS.

IN TEN

LETTERS TO A NIECE.

BY BARON STOW,
Pastor of the Middle St. Baptist Church, Portsmouth, N. H.

*"Suffer little children to come unto me."
Command of Christ.*

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY JAMES LORING.
PERKINS & MARVIN, LINCOLN & EDMANDS, AND
PEIRCE & PARKER.

.....
1832.

present, and prepare them all for death and judgment.....pp. 10 and 100.

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HARRIET DOW.

LETTER I.

“Religion is the chief concern
Of mortals here below ;
May I its great importance learn,
Its sovereign virtue know.”

MY DEAR LITTLE NIECE,

You remember, when I was at your father's house last summer, I told you something about an amiable little girl who repented of her sins, and loved the Saviour, and delighted to pray. Her name, like yours, was Harriet. You said you should be pleased to hear more about her, especially about her character and conduct after she became a Christian, and how she felt and talked in her last illness, when death was about to call her happy spirit home to heaven. I then told you that possibly I might find time to write

you a few letters, which should contain a more particular account of her religious experience than I could give in conversation and that perhaps I might have the letters printed in a little book, suitable for Sabbath School Libraries, so that they could be read by a great many children all over New England. You said you liked the Bible the best of all books, but that you delighted to read such books also as tell about those good people who love and serve Jesus, and delight in rejoicing in his name. And you promised me if I would write you such letters, and tell you all the good things which I know about little Harriet, you would read it seriously and try to be as lovely a Christian as she was.

You asked me how I could know enough about her so as to make a book large enough to print. I believe I told you that after Harriet died, her sister Elizabeth, who was older, wrote a short account of her life, deeds and religious exercises, which was printed six or seven years ago in quite a little book

together with a sermon that was preached in reference to her death. But the whole story about Harriet was very short, for it filled only thirteen pages, and a great many people who knew her were always sorry that her sister did not tell more concerning her. I told you, however, that I could get from this little book a number of good things to fill up my letters; and as Elizabeth was herself pious, you may depend upon what she says as perfectly true. Besides, you cannot have forgotten how I told you that I was myself very well acquainted with Harriet. When she was quite young, I used to see her frequently at her father's house, so that I knew how she behaved at home. She and I attended the same school, and I knew how she conducted there. She generally sat upon a seat directly before me, and I had a good opportunity to see whether she was a good scholar or not. And when she became pious, I knew how she felt and conversed, for she used to tell me her exercises as freely as to her mother and sister.

You then acknowledged that you thought I must know enough of Harriet to enable me to write several letters, and yet tell nothing but the truth.

“Nothing but the truth!” said I, “and do you think that any body writes that which is not true?”

“Yes, indeed,” you answered, very positively, “I am certain that a great many of the story-books that I once loved to read cannot be true. Mother says they are false, and I do not like to read them now. I love to read the Bible *because it is true*, and because it tells about Jesus, and teaches me how to pray and to be good. And I think I shall be delighted to read all you will say about that good little girl, for I believe you will not try to make her appear better than she was. But if she was ever naughty, I do not wish you to say a great deal about it, for I see naughty girls enough almost every day.”

Now, my dear little friend, I have written what you requested. All that you find in

this book is as near the truth-as I can make it. As you have begun it, and have read so far, I hope you will remember your promise and read it through. But let me ask you to do one thing first, which perhaps you have forgotten. You ought never to read a book without asking God in prayer to make it a blessing to your soul.

PRAYER.

O Lord, my heavenly Father, I thank Thee that I have the privilege of reading so many good books; and I thank Thee that Thou hast taught me to love them and try to get instruction from them. I thank Thee especially for this new book, and now pray that I may be able to understand it, and that it may do me good. May I learn from it how to be humble, and prayerful, and holy. May I be led by it to hate sin more, and to love my Saviour better. May it teach me how to live, and how to die. But may I not be more pleased with this or any book, than my Bible. Thy word I would value more

good, may
may be brought to see their
and believe in Jesus, so that
souls may be saved. O that
Redeemer might be loved by
so that if they die young,
heaven; or if they live, they
examples and be useful. T
ask, not because I deserve
Jesus's sake. Amen.



LETTER I

BIRTH AND B

the road that leads to Concord, you may possibly think enough of her to inquire for her birth-place. The house is two stories high, and is painted red. It stands on the north side of the road, and is a little more than a mile from the village, where are the court-house, two meeting-houses, a number of stores, taverns and shops, and a great many dwelling houses. Along in front of this red house where Harriet lived and died, runs Sugar river, a small stream that carries a great many mills, and empties the waters of Sanapee lake into Connecticut river. At a short distance back of the house rises a very high ridge of land, which in some places would be called quite a mountain.

Harriet's father is a respectable and industrious farmer, who has ever supported his family by hard labour. He has suffered a great many afflictions. Several of his family have died suddenly, and his mourning has been very deep and sincere. He has also the misfortune to be almost deaf, so as not to be able to hear preaching or enjoy conversa-

tion. But his afflictions have been a blessing to him. Instead of hardening his heart, they seem to have been so sanctified by God as to soften it, and lead him to trust in Jesus more than ever, as his Friend and Saviour.

The mother, who is now in eternity, and trust in heaven, was a pious woman. O what a precious blessing it is to have a Christian mother, who will teach her little children that they have souls, and that there is a God, and how they must be good, if they would be happy and dwell in heaven with God after they die. All this, and a great deal more, did Harriet's mother teach her when she was very small. She taught her much about the character of God, that great and good Being, who is every where present, and how he sees every thing that we do, and hears every word we speak. She explained to her also the nature of sin, and showed her that it consisted in thinking, saying or doing what God had forbidden, or in neglecting to think, and say and do what God has commanded. In this way the little

girl, when not three years old, was made to see that she was a sinner against God, and that her heart was not good in his sight. Her mother also told her much about Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners—how great and happy he was in heaven before ever this world was made—how condescending and kind he was to come and be a poor man and be treated so badly, and suffer and die so painfully, all to save such wicked people as we are from everlasting misery. Many a time did Harriet weep, when she thought of the sufferings of Jesus, and she wondered how the men could be so wicked and hard-hearted as to abuse him so shamefully, and strike him so much, and drive so many nails through his hands and his feet, and then hang him up on a cross till he died. O, she thought, if she had been there, she would not have cried out as they did, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” And then she would ask, “Mother, you said that some children cried ‘Hosanna to the Son of David.’ Do

you think any of them wished to have Jesus crucified?"

Her mother took great pains to help her understand the Bible, and would explain the meaning of verses to her in such simple words as Harriet could understand. And when the dear little girl came to her to ask questions, she did not turn her away, as some mothers do, and tell her to hold her tongue; but she would answer her, and try to give her as much knowledge as possible about sin, and Christ, and another world.

These things encouraged Harriet to think, and endeavour to learn all she could. Hence you will not wonder, when I tell you that she knew more about a great many things, when quite young, than some people who are fifty years old.

Now do you not think that Harriet had a very good mother? And do you not wish that all little girls had such a mother? If they had, there would be more good children in the world.

Harriet had a very mild and amiable

disposition. You have seen little girls show bad temper at almost every thing which they did not like. But she scarcely ever exhibited any thing like anger. If she was not well treated, she would not "get mad," and use naughty words, nor would she be sullen and refuse to speak, but she would go into another room alone and grieve, as if her heart would break. And if she was denied any thing she wanted, she would not keep teasing for it, and saying she would have it, but she would submit quietly, and think her parents knew best what she ought to have.

Harriet was very sober and thoughtful. She was not so fond of play and merriment as other children, and hardly ever was she known to engage in any of their sports. When her little friends visited her, she would sometimes take them into a chamber, and have a little meeting, singing hymns, and talking about religion. Sometimes she would invite them into the garden, and get them to converse about the flowers, telling them that God made all the plants and trees, and every

times of the day, when no danger appeared was she frequently found alone in tears thinking about sin, and death, and a world to come. When any one died in the town, she would be deeply affected, and inquire if the deceased had repented and believed in Jesus and whether she might not die next.

When only three years old, she requested her mother to teach her how to pray, and having learned some children's prayers from a little book which she had, she never afterwards retired to rest, nor ever rose in the morning, without repeating, in a solemn manner, some one of them. Sometimes she would express her desires in her own language, begging of God to forgive her sins, change her heart, and prepare her soul for heaven.

All this time, however, she had no true love to God, nor repentance for sin. She was afraid to die, as you know most children are. They tremble when they think of being put into a coffin and buried up in the ground. She was also afraid to sin, because she thought God would punish her for it. Now

you can easily see that she did not love God, for if she had, she would have been willing to die and go and dwell with Him in glory. And if she had truly loved God, she would have been afraid to sin because sin is offensive to Him. It is therefore evident enough that she had no real religion. All her feelings, and actions and prayers were *selfish*. She was a very good girl, but she was not yet a Christian. How she became pious, I may perhaps tell you something in the next letter.



LETTER III.

AWAKENED WHEN ONLY EIGHT YEARS OLD.

“Show pity, Lord, O Lord forgive,
Let a repenting rebel live;
Are not thy mercies large and free?
May not a sinner trust in thee?”

MY DEAR H—,

You have been reading what kind of a child little Harriet was when quite small. She remained about the same, until the month of August, in the year 1818, when she was

nearly eight years old. Some time in the course of that month she began to have a new view of her sinful and perishing condition. Though she had been a remarkably good child, yet she found she was a sinner, and had a bad heart. The circumstance which led to this view of herself was nothing very extraordinary; yet as it occasioned her much feeling, I will relate it just as it was.

One day her mother told her to shut the door that was open. But she, happening to be busy just at that moment, about some of her own affairs, and feeling a little displeas'd to be thus interrupted, answered in a low tone, "I will not!" O, what a wicked answer was that. She almost instantly felt that it was wicked, and before her mother had time to speak again, she went and closed the door.

I need not tell you how much this case resembles one which is described in the twenty-first chapter of Matthew. A certain man had two sons, and he told them both to go and work in his vineyard. The first

“answered and said, I will not: but afterwards he repented and went.” He sinned grievously in answering his father so unkindly; but as he repented of his wrong, and went and did as he was bidden, he was pardoned. The second son promised that he would go; but he went not. Now you can easily see which was guilty of the most sin. The first committed only *one* offence, and as he was afterwards sorry for it, his father forgave him. But the second was guilty of two sins. He *violated his promise, and disobeyed his father.*

Now Harriet acted like the first. She said she would not shut the door, but immediately repented and did as she was commanded. She felt that she had done wrong, and though her mother did not hear a word she had said, yet she knew that God heard her, and could not be pleased with her conduct. She considered that she had told a lie; and her friends say that this came the nearest to falsehood of any thing she was ever known to utter. During her whole life

she had ~~the~~ credit of always telling the *truth* and whenever she said any thing, every ~~body~~ who heard her, believed her ~~statements~~. Her distress on this occasion was great. ~~She~~ felt that she had *in heart* disobeyed her mother. But her deepest grief was on account of her offence against God. I do not think that she then had a view of the real sinfulness of what she had done, or that she hated her sin because God hates it. But she seemed to think especially of the punishment which she was in danger of suffering, because she had sinned. She was afraid God would not forgive her, and her alarm was so great that she hardly knew what to do. But knowing that she must go to God, whom she had offended, and ask for his mercy, she went away into her chamber alone three times that same day, and each time confessed her sin, and prayed the Lord to forgive her. Her distress, however, seemed to be all on account of this one sin. She was not fully sensible that she had an unholy heart, and that she must repent of *all*

her sins, and believe in Jesus Christ, in order to obtain forgiveness. She was not yet so anxious to be *holy*, as she was to be *saved*.

But from that time she became more deeply serious, often weeping, and praying more frequently than usual. Such was the state of her mind, that she lost her appetite, and looked pale, so that the family thought she must be unwell. They did not then know the cause of her gloomy, sickly appearance, and she was not willing to tell them. They considered her as "so good a child," that they hardly thought she could possibly be mourning over sin, and distressed about the state of her soul. They even talked of sending for a physician, and would have done it, if she had not positively assured them she was not sick. In order to please them, therefore, she tried to appear more cheerful, and though she could not suppress all her feelings about death and judgment, yet her pride of heart induced her to keep them concealed as much as possible. She continued praying, and sometimes thought that

God had forgiven her. She knew she had felt a great deal of anxiety, and had prayed several times a day, and she concluded that for those very reasons God must certainly have pardoned her sin. And as *pardon* was what she most earnestly desired, whenever she could make herself believe that she had obtained it, she could feel quite easy. But soon her fears would come up again, and her distress would return. She read in many places in her Bible that God is ready to forgive those who repent and ask for mercy. She thought she had repented, and she knew that she prayed for his pardoning favor. But she could not feel certain that she was forgiven, and she often felt hard toward God for not doing to her as she wished. Sometimes she would almost resolve not to pray any more, for it seemed to do no good. But this she did not dare to do, lest her soul should be lost; and so she would resolve to continue praying a little longer, and to see if she prayed more frequently and fervently whether she could not obtain the blessing.

After a few days she would again indulge some kind of hope that God had heard her petitions and granted her mercy. At last she became quite established in the belief that it was truly so, and she determined to be happy. But her confidence was soon shaken, and with it, her happiness was destroyed. The occasion of it was as follows.

One day she heard her mother say, in conversation with some friends on the subject of religion, that God does not regard the prayers of the wicked, while they continue impenitent and unbelieving, and that no prayer is acceptable to him unless the heart is humble, and truly loves him and trusts him. This remark was not intended for her, for her mother did not know what were her feelings. But she fully understood it, and it went like a dagger to her heart. Her hope withered like grass, when cut down by the scythe. She saw that she was still wicked; that her heart had never been changed, and that she was not a believer in Jesus Christ. She felt that she had prayed to God because

she was *afraid* of him, and not because she *loved* him or *trusted* him. She therefore concluded that she was not pardoned, and that her prayers had not been regarded because they were offered with selfish feelings.

Her distress was now greater than ever. She had new views of God and of herself, but still she was unwilling that others should know what she thought and felt. Her friends observed a manifest change. She appeared more depressed and disconsolate than ever. She grew poor, and her strength failed, and many thought she was in a decline. Her parents and others would frequently inquire if she was sick, and always received a negative answer. They therefore believed her, for they knew she would not tell an untruth. They were confident, however, that something was the matter, and felt quite anxious about it.

Now, my dear H., you will probably inquire, in your mind, why her parents especially her mother, did not try harder to find out what was the real difficulty, and

endeavour to give her daughter such instruction and consolation as her distressed condition seemed to require. This is a very important question, and I do not know as I can answer it. I am not willing to say any thing that might be looked upon as a reflection upon so good a woman as her mother, especially as she is not now living, and is gone, I trust, to join her beloved Harriet in the kingdom of heaven. But perhaps I ought to say something on this point, so that you need not think her mother was really worse than a great many other parents.

At that time, which was almost fourteen years ago, it was not so common as it is now for such young children to have a sense of their sins, and be anxious about their souls, and desire to be saved. It was generally thought that they were too young to be converted, and to repent, and exercise faith in Jesus. Consequently the conversion of little children was not enough expected and prayed for. They were taught to fear God, and read his word, and pray to him every night

and morning. But these things were done to prevent them from becoming very wicked and with the hope that God would sometime or other bless the seed sown, and render it the instrument of their future conversion. Now it is very probable that Harriet's mother had not expected or prayed that her little daughter might become a Christian so very young; and though she had given her much good instruction, and taught her to pray, yet she had done every thing with the view to make Harriet a good girl when she should grow up to be fifteen or eighteen years old. Probably she did not suppose that the Spirit of God would operate on a mind so young, convincing it of sin and righteousness and judgment, and therefore did not suspect that Harriet's gloominess and depression were occasioned by any real anxiety about the welfare of her soul. This I think was the chief reason why she did not talk with Harriet more directly about repentance and faith. She was waiting for her to become older and larger, so that she might be able to unde

stand such important subjects. And it is just so with a great many Christian parents. They forget that when their children are old enough to sin, they are old enough to repent, and old enough to be converted. Why may they not become Christians between the ages of *four* and *ten years*, as well as between the ages of *ten* and *twenty*? They may, if parents would only believe it, and pray and labour for it accordingly.

But you probably are anxious to hear something more about the state of Harriet's mind. I have said that, after she heard those true and cutting remarks which her mother made in company about the prayers of the wicked, she became more disconsolate than ever. Her alarm increased. She knew that God was present every where, and as she was a sinner, she said she was "afraid to be alone with Him," lest he should appear to her, or say something to her that would frighten her. She was unwilling to retire alone at night, or even by day to go into a room by herself. The family supposed she

might have had some terrific dream, or heard some frightful stories, such as idle, imprudent people are often telling children about witches and ghosts, and therefore made little account of her fears. O, if they had known the true cause of her alarm, and what was actually passing in her mind, how differently would they have felt concerning her case, and how very differently would they have treated her distresses. But the thought did not seem to occur to them, that her tender mind was occupied about God, and heaven, and hell, and it was a considerable time before she could have courage to tell them what was really the matter.

At length a good opportunity occurred, and as she could contain her feelings no longer, she frankly made them known.

One evening after she had retired, the family overheard her weeping, as if in the greatest distress. Her father went to her and inquired for the cause.

She said twice, with a great deal of earnestness, and a look of agony, " Oh ! sir,

"I don't want to die!" "I don't want to die."
He told her he hoped she would not, and that she had better be quiet and go to sleep.

But she impatiently replied, "If I don't die now, I must die some time, and I am not prepared!"

What her father said to this, I do not know. He was not then so pious as he is now, and consequently was not very well qualified to tell her how she might be prepared. He might have told her to believe in Jesus, and give up her heart to him, and love him. And he might have told her how ready Christ is to receive little children, when they come to him, and to bless them. And in this way he might have done her anxious soul a great deal of good. But I suspect he did nothing like this. He probably tried to hush her to rest, and so left her, without administering the true consolation which the gospel affords.

He has since become a more engaged Christian himself, and now tells his children and others *how to be prepared to die.*

HARRIET DOW.

LETTER IV.

HARRIET'S CONVERSION.

"Behold I fall before thy face,
 My only refuge is thy grace;
 No outward form can make me clean,
 The leprosy lies deep within."

"No bleeding bird, nor bleeding beast,
 Nor hysop branch, nor sprinkling priest,
 Nor running brook, nor blood, nor sea,
 Can wash the dismal stain away."

MY DEAR NIECE,

By this time, doubtless, you begin to feel considerable sympathy for Harriet, and wish that her sufferings of mind could have been sooner relieved. When she made known her distress and the cause of it, to her father, she probably hoped in some way to obtain comfort of some kind or other. But in this she was disappointed, and her anxiety continued unabated. Her sins appeared to be great, and she felt that she was not in a fit state for the kingdom of heaven. Death was still a most gloomy and awful subject.

About this time the H. which was in the autumn of 1818, by a post who was absent, wrote home an account of the death of an impenitent man in a state of —. Though he had enjoyed Newport privileges, and had been often warned and entreated to prepare to meet his God, he had delayed preparation, promising to do it at some future period. He was taken ill, and when it became certain that he could not recover, he began to think of his situation, and to dread leaving the world, for he knew how wretched must be his soul in eternity. He died without hope, and in the keenest agony of mind !

“O how dreadful was this,” said Harriet to herself, as her mother read the painful story ; “I am afraid I shall die just so ; and if I do, what will become of my soul !”

Thus the impressions upon her mind became deeper and deeper, and the Holy Spirit was gradually leading her towards that state of feeling, where she would “give up all for Christ.” As yet she had thought very little about a Redeemer. She was sensible

HARRIET DOW.

... was holy, and ... he had offende
... she was ende ... ng to obtai
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... e to Christ's sub ... VE ... and blood
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... was said to her ... grace; ... the way o
... l salvation. She ... ealed he
... s as much as possib ... the family
... d all company, and was often found
... in tears. When asked why she wept
... ould waive the subject, and escape the
... sity of a direct answer. But the work
... ntrition still went on in the deep places
... ad much in the Bible.

produced by the Holy Spirit, which God sends down in a powerful manner, so that a great many become serious and are turned to the Lord in a short time. Such was the case in Newport. A number of young persons, besides Harriet, had been alarmed for two or three months, about the state of their souls; but as Christians then were generally in a very stupid condition, cold, and backslidden, they said nothing to any one, and like Harriet, kept their feelings to themselves. They wept and mourned a great deal, but knew of none to whom they could go for counsel and consolation. But late in the autumn, several Christians in the Baptist Church began to feel and lament their own stupidity. They confessed their sins one to another, and prayed to God for pardon. They prayed also for the conversion of sinners, and it was not many days before some of those who had been a long time serious, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and found him an able and a willing Saviour, to the great joy of their souls. Many others were

awakened, and a general seriousness very soon pervaded the town.

At an early period in the revival, a conference, or as some would say, a prayer meeting was appointed and held at the school-house near where Harriet lived. She was permitted to attend, and went hoping to hear something that might show her the way to be saved. A young gentleman was present who had just gained a hope in the pardoning mercy of God, and was rejoicing in the love of the truth. He felt deeply anxious for his young friends and associates, and when liberty was given for any to speak who might feel disposed, he rose and addressed them in relation to the concerns of their souls. He had lived and sported with them in the follies of the world. They had sinned together and been companions in the broad road. Now he had lost his relish for sin, and had chosen the better part, and he wished them to think on their ways and be wise. If he could remember his remarks, I would tell you the whole. But I cannot. I can assure

you, however, that he felt tenderly for the welfare of their souls, and endeavoured faithfully to urge upon them the importance of religion. He warned them of their danger, every hour exposed to die, and be cast off into outer darkness. He also invited them to Jesus, and told them how precious a Saviour he is, and how ready he is to have mercy on all, who come to him with the whole heart. And I well remember the passage of Scripture with which he closed his remarks : " Behold now is the accepted time. Behold now is the day of salvation." His address, and a prayer which he made at the close of the meeting, made a deep impression on several minds, and the Holy Spirit made them the means of converting two or three precious souls.

Among those who felt deeply every word that was said, was little Harriet. She listened attentively the whole evening, and returned home in tears and great distress. Her mother asked her the cause of her grief, and received for answer, that she viewed herself as a great

mind. Thus she learned what the occasion of her daughter's gloom and depression, and found it to be a series of sins against God, and her exposure to His wrath.

Then did the mother chide her for making these inquiries before, as she was guilty before God of neglecting the soul of her child. The Holy Spirit had for two or three months been under the awakening of her attention, and the anxieties of this little girl, which her mother, and a professing Christian, had been indifferent to. She had attributed her melancholy to quite other causes than to the impressions. But now she und

hardly where to begin. And her embarrassment was not a little increased, when, after asking Harriet, "why did you not tell me your feelings before," she received for reply, "Why, mother, you never asked me. You used to inquire if I was sick, and I always told you I was not, and I told you the truth. But you did not ask me about my soul."

The mother felt the rebuke, and confessed her wrong, and then proceeded to converse further with Harriet about her fears and anxieties.

She said she had tried to live without sin, but found that she sinned more and more every day. "Once," said she, "I thought I was too young to attend to religion, and I concluded to delay it until I should be older. But now I find that I am not too young to sin against God; I know I am old enough to remember my Creator. I am determined to seek the Lord while he may be found. I am afraid I shall die without religion."

Her mother attempted to point her to Jesus Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour, just

such a Saviour as she needed. But she said she did not know *how* to believe in Jesus. "I wish I did know. Mother, *how* did you?"

She passed that night in great distress of mind, often speaking of the greatness of her sins, and of her danger as a sinner out of Christ. She was afraid to sleep, lest she should awake in the world of wo. The next morning she arose with a settled seriousness on her countenance, and spent the greater part of the day in retirement and prayer. She was overheard making the most penitent confessions, acknowledging that she had a very wicked heart, and that she did not deserve mercy, because she had lived *more than eight years* in the world without serving God a single day. But she earnestly prayed that he would be merciful to her and forgive her.

At a meeting one evening, soon after this, Mr. W——, the Congregationalist minister, requested all who felt anxious for the salvation of their souls, and were resolved to attend to

it as their first concern, to arise. A large number arose, and among them was little Harriet. She attracted his special attention, and he immediately asked her if she felt herself to be a sinner ?

“ I do,” said she, “ one of the greatest.”

He then asked her what made her think so.

“ My Bible tells me so. And I see it in my own heart.”

“ Have you always thought yourself such a sinner.”

“ No, sir, only two or three months. I once thought I was better than other children. But now I find I am worse.”

“ What makes you think you are worse ?”

“ Because I have a worse heart.”

Mr. W. proposed a number of other questions which she readily answered, and he soon found that a deep work was going on in her heart. He endeavoured to direct her to the great Redeemer, and urged her immediately to give up her soul into the hands

of Christ, who stood ready to receive and save her.

Several Christians in the neighbourhood became much interested in her case, often called to see her, and converse with her. The views which she had of the character of God, and of her own sinfulness were such, that they had no doubt but the Spirit of the Lord was at work in her heart. So great was her anxiety, and such confidence had she in the prayers of Christians, that unless they offered to pray before leaving her, she would always ask of them for favour; and when they had done as desired, she would entreat them to remember her in all their prayers, that God might bestow his mercy on her soul.

She kept her Bible and hymn-book by her almost continually, and would often repeat the following Psalm with great solemnity and emphasis :—

“ Show pity, Lord ; O Lord, forgive ;
Let a repenting rebel live ;
Are not thy mercies large and free ?
May not a sinner trust in thee ?

“ My crimes are great, but not surpass
The power and glory of thy grace ;
Great God, thy nature hath no bound,
So let thy pardoning love be found.

“ O wash my soul from every sin,
And make my guilty conscience clean ;
Here on my heart the burden lies,
And past offences pain mine eyes.

“ My lips with shame my sins confess,
Against thy law, against thy grace ;
Lord, should thy judgment grow severe,
I am condemn'd, but thou art clear.

“ Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,
I must pronounce thee just in death ;
And if my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well.

“ Yet save a trembling sinner, Lord,
Whose hope still hovering round thy word,
Would light on some sweet promise there,
Some sure support against despair.”

When asked whether she could say that the promises of the Bible were “sweet,” she replied that they must be sweet to all who could *take* them. But she did not think any of the promises were for her. Every thing she read she thought condemned her.

While in this deep distress of mind, deploring and weeping over the depravity of her heart, she attended an evening meeting

where she heard a number of young *people* give an account of their religious experience. They described the views which they had of their lost condition as sinners, and how they found pardon and peace and hope, by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. She found that they related many things which corresponded with her own feelings. But they had found mercy, while she was left still to mourn in darkness and sorrow. Why was this? She feared it was an indication that God did not intend to save her. And she thought too that it was hard—for she had been distressed and mourning for months, while some of these “new converts” had been “under conviction” only a few days.

Thus you see, my dear Harriet, that the rebellion of her heart was not yet fully subdued. She was not reconciled to the ways of God. This she soon became sensible of, and her distress increased. She saw that she had offended God by her murmuring, and concluded that he would now be less disposed to forgive her than before. So

great was her distress and agony, that she requested her mother to send for a Christian neighbour to come in and pray for her soul. He came, and conversed with her most tenderly, and tried to persuade her to give up her heart to God, and trust in him through the blood and merits of the Saviour. She said she had been thinking of the day of judgment, and wished him to tell her how God would judge mankind at that day—and who would be placed on the right hand, and who on the left? She was afraid she should be found on the left, and sent away into everlasting punishment.

After prayer was offered to God that he would appear in mercy for her, and set her soul at liberty, she passed the remainder of the evening in sighs and tears. Often would she exclaim, "My sins! Oh! my sins are too great to be forgiven!" She was at length, at a late hour, persuaded to retire, but not to sleep. Frightful views of her sinfulness and danger kept her constantly agitated and restless. Nothing but destruction appeared be-

HARRIET DOW.

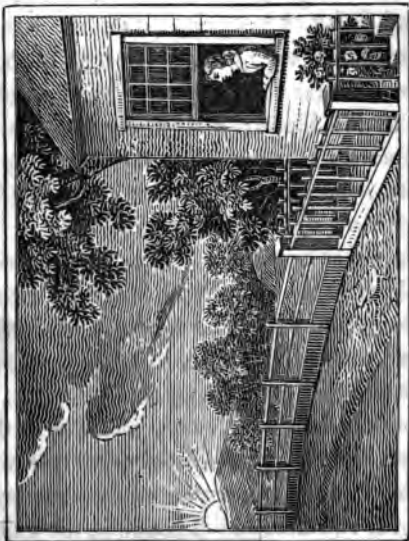
er. She felt that she deserved it, and confessed it to God. She thought not of Christ; especially how he suffered for her; she felt that *her own* sins had been the cause of his death, and had crucified him, and had added to his pain. She reflected upon the whole story of the gospel, and the judgment-hall, and the cross, and her soul melted within her, and she saw that Jesus was just such a Saviour as she needed. She saw that he was able and willing to save, and that all the difficulty existed in herself. She had not come to Christ, but she had given herself up to him, and this she knew, for she had not found rest in her own thoughts.

and as previously she could not sleep because of grief, so now she could not sleep for joy. She felt so grateful to Christ for bleeding and dying as a Saviour, that she wanted to glorify him with all her strength of body and soul. Her sins seemed to be all washed away by his blood; and when the thought came across her mind that this might be all a dream, she spoke out aloud, and said, "It is not a dream, for I am awake."

The night was soon gone. At a very early hour in the morning, her mother visited her room, and asked her how she felt. She rose up instantly, and said with a smiling countenance, "I am happy."

The sun had just risen, and was at that moment lighting up the eastern horizon with a scene of tranquil beauty, such as she thought she never saw before. Though in the month of January, yet there was a softness in the air, and a rich splendour in the sun's radiance, that resembled Spring rather than Winter.

"O, how beautiful," she exclaimed, "how



beautiful the sun looks ! I never saw it so before. It wears a smile, and so does every thing."

Her mother asked her what made every thing look so pleasant.

"Because," she answered, "every thing is praising God, and I too must join in his praises."

Soon she arose, read several of the Psalms of David, and appeared to be composed and happy through the day. She talked much about Christ, and wondered why every body did not love him, because, as she said, "he is so good, and has done so much for a world of sinners."

Toward night she observed, "This is the happiest day I ever experienced. Last night I felt dreadfully burdened ; — now I feel that I could fly."

Her mother asked what occasioned such an alteration in her mind.

She then related how she had felt the preceding night — what views she had of her sins, of heaven, of hell, and of Christ, and

how she had given up herself into the hands of God, feeling that she was dependent, *and willing to be dependent* on the blood of Jesus for salvation. She then described what a change took place in her feelings, and how she felt constrained to praise the Lord, even during the darkness of the night, for his mercy to such a poor, unworthy sinner. "Now," said she, "I am not afraid to die."

"What," said her mother, "are you willing to leave all your friends, and be laid in the cold ground?"

"I am," she replied, "for then I should be with Christ. I love him better than any of my friends in this world."

She conversed with all the family about religion, and recommended it to several young persons, who called in the course of the evening. She urged them all to repent, and seek immediately an interest in Christ.

She seemed to feel a particular desire for her oldest sister, who was then partially awakened, and addressed her most affectionately and faithfully.

“Do you think,” said she, “that you are too young to attend to your soul’s concerns? I am younger than you, but I found it would not be safe for me to delay. Repent, and believe in Jesus, and God will have mercy on you. He forgave me, and I know he will you.”

She was very anxious for all her young friends and acquaintance, that they should repent and turn to God before it should be too late. All whom she saw she would warn and entreat to seek the Lord while he might be found.

Her joys were great. Prayer and praise were her constant delight. She was filled with love to Christ, and in his hands she rejoiced to trust her whole soul for time and eternity.

She had a small pamphlet containing sixteen short sermons addressed to children, which she delighted to read. The following hymn she selected and committed to memory, and often related to her little friends:—

HARRIET DOW.

“Come, children, 'tis Jesus that calls,
The voice of your Saviour obey;
When Jesus invites you to come,
No disciple shall turn you away.

“The children he folds in his arms
Must surely be blessed indeed;
For Jesus alone can bestow,
The spiritual blessings they need.

“Let parents with thankfulness own
The encouragements Jesus has given;
Delighted to hear him declare,
'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.'”



LETTER V.

HARRIET'S TALK WITH HER FATHER.

“Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love and power,
That ever mortals knew,
That ever angels bore;
All are too mean to speak his worth,
Too mean to set my Saviour forth.”

My last letter, my dear friend, was rather long. But I did not know well how to make it shorter, without dividing too much the story of Harriet's religious experience. I thought the account was at all interesting to you,

presume you will thank me for not making it shorter, or cutting it into smaller parts.

I have carried you through her scenes of weeping and sorrow, and you have seen her brought to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

These joys continued for a long time. She was truly one of the happiest children I ever saw.

The very first evening after she found this sweet relief, a conference meeting was held at one of the neighbour's houses, and so anxious was she to attend, that her parents gratified her wishes, and allowed her to go. After the meeting had been opened by singing and prayer, and one or two old Christians had made some remarks, Harriet spoke a few words, and said she felt as if she ought to acknowledge publicly what the Lord had done for her soul. She gave a short account of the views which she had obtained of her depravity and danger, and how she had been led to trust in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ the Saviour. It was really de-

lightful to hear her ascribe her salvation all to grace.

“O,” said she, “such a sinner as I could never be forgiven, were it not for the death of Jesus. But he came into the world to save the chief of sinners.”

At the same time she addressed her young friends, with the tears running from her eyes, and entreated them to remember their Creator in early life.

“Do not put off,” she would say, “the concerns of your souls. You know not how long you will live. But if you should live a hundred years, how can you bear to live in sin, and disobey so good a Being as God? How can you reject such a blessed Saviour, who suffered so much for you? Why will you not come and join with me? We have lived together in sin. Now let us go together to heaven.”

She said some other things, all of which were very solemn and affecting. Several young persons became quite serious in consequence of what she said that evening; and

a number of aged persons could not refrain from tears, when she spoke of herself as "a *great sinner*," and of having lived "*so long* without religion."

Some, however, who did not like to be exhorted by such a little child, were quite offended because she was allowed to speak in meeting. But I presume her remarks touched their consciences rather uncomfortably, and made them unhappy, and so they thought, in order to conceal or smother their feelings, they would find a little fault.

If you live only to be as old as I am, you will find a great many people acting in this manner. And when you see them go home from meeting fretting and scolding about some little things, you may generally know that the truth has disturbed their *consciences*. Such persons would be wiser to keep still, for they expose themselves to all who hear their complaints.

After Harriet returned from conference that evening, she related to her father her joys in Christ, and conversed with him about

the state of his mind. She asked him had any hope in Jesus ; and, if he had, he lived as he did, without professing religion, or performing religious duties.

The next morning she arose very early and went to her father, who was at work and advised him, if he had any religion, to come in and pray with his family. He told her that he felt so stupid he did not think he could.

She continued pleading — “ Now do it for me ; I could not pray once, but *now* with delight.”

“ Why,” said he, “ do you feel so anxious about it, my daughter ?”

“ Christ,” she quickly replied, “ commanded Peter to feed his lambs, and can you not feed your *children* with the word of God ?”

He still tried to evade a compliance, but she followed him wherever he went, begging him to try to pray, and assuring him that if he tried, the Lord would help him.

At length his feelings overcame him. He felt guilty, and knew what he ought to do.

He burst into tears, went into the house, called the family together, read a chapter in the Bible, and offered a very humble prayer to God. This practice he afterwards continued for a considerable time. I hope he still continues it; for if he does not, he has now no pious little Harriet to reprove his backslidings, and lead him into the path of duty.

The next evening there was a conference about three miles off, and as she wished to attend it, she asked her father to go and carry her. He told her the weather was not pleasant, and that she would suffer with the cold, which was very severe. But she said she could endure any thing for the sake of hearing about Christ and salvation. He complied with her request, and she complained none at all of being cold. The truth was, my dear Harriet, that her heart was warm, and you have doubtless read an old hymn, which begins with these two lines :—


“ Christians, if your hearts are warm,
Ice and snow can do no harm.”

In the course of the evening, the minister

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converts in that revival were blest to the conversion of so many persons, as were the tender and simple exhortations of this "*little child.*"

The next Sabbath she attended public worship. The Rev. Mr. N. preached from these words—" *And after this the judgment.*" You will find them in Heb. ix. 27. She was greatly delighted with the sermon; though she said it made her feel solemn to think how many would go to the judgment unprepared. She said this was the first Sabbath she had ever *enjoyed*, and wondered why she had never loved that sacred day before. The gospel had been very precious to her, and she was heard to say, after her return from worship, "I wish I could always be where I could hear the word of God."

In the evening, a young friend having called at her father's, Harriet conversed with her an hour or more about the concerns of her soul, exhorting her to repent of her sins, and embrace the accepted time, "which," said she, "is *now*. God's time is *now*. You

must not delay. How *can* you delay? If you go on in this way, and die in your sins, Christ will say to you, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;' then how will you feel, to be cast off yourself, and see others received to everlasting happiness?"

In this way she would converse with all whom she thought unprepared for heaven, and faithfully warn them to "*flee from the wrath to come.*" A great many, who now call themselves men and women, can remember these serious exhortations which she addressed to them. But I am afraid that some of them do not remember her words with much profit, for they do not live and pray as she used to tell them they must do, if they would be good and happy.

Harriet being so young at the time of her conversion, and the style of her conversation being so remarkable, she soon became an object of general interest. Many called to see her whom she had never known, and none went away without hearing something from her lips of a striking and impressive

character. But none of these attentions seemed to lift her up at all, or make her proud. She rejoiced in them, however, as furnishing good opportunities for her to speak in praise of her Saviour, and recommend him to a great many sinners.

But there were some who were so wicked as to ridicule her, and make a mock of her exhortations and prayers. They said some very unkind things about her; and when she spoke in any of the conference meetings, they would go away and use her expressions as by-words. These people you will of course know were not such as cared any thing about God, or their souls, or eternity. They pretended to be displeased with her, while in reality their opposition was to *Christ*. They hated him, and hated all his faithful disciples, and were displeased about the revival, and so they took this method to show it. Now remember this:—Not one of these opposers became a Christian during that revival; and I believe all of them, who are now living, are still the enemies of the cross

of Christ. I greatly fear they will all die, as some have already died, without repentance and faith!

Harriet used to hear sometimes, of their unkind remarks; but she said very little about them, and never seemed to be in the least hurt or disturbed. One evening at a meeting, when a number of these her enemies were present, she was asked if she had any thing to say. Without making any reply, she directly handed to the minister a Psalm, which she wished to be read and sung. It was the 118th Psalm, first part, Common Metre, and begins thus:—

“ The Lord appears my helper now,
Nor is my faith afraid
What all the sons of earth can do,
Since heaven affords its aid.”

The Psalm is too long for me to quote. I wish you would turn to it and read the whole and then you will see how well it must have expressed her feelings. Still, however, I am not certain that she did right in proposing such a Psalm. It looked a little like boasting and triumphing over her opposers, &

though she took that opportunity to mortify them, and let all the people know what she thought of them. It appeared so to me at the time, and it still appears the same. And yet, I do not know that she had any bad motive. I believe she tried in all things to do right. But I really should have been better pleased if she had taken no public notice at all of those wicked young persons, and had only prayed for them in her closet, that God would convert their souls. We are commanded to forgive our enemies, and if we really possess the spirit of forgiveness, we shall never have any disposition to show any sort of resentment. Especially shall we never show any of this bad spirit in our prayers, or singing, or exhortations.

“How true it is,” you will say, “that no one on earth is holy. Jesus was pure. Nothing that he thought, or said, or did, was wrong. But the best of his followers have some imperfection. What a blessed place heaven will be, where all will be holy as he is holy.”

LETTER VI.

HARRIET HOLDS A MEETING WITH
LITTLE CHILDREN.

“My lips and cheerful heart prepare
To make his mercies known;
Come, ye that fear my God, and hear
The wonders he hath done.”

MY DEAR NIECE,

I shall soon relate how Harriet the Church. But I have a few things about her before I come to that interesting event.

One time, I well recollect, while a group of young children of about her age, came to make her an afternoon visit, she told them she could not play and frolic with them as of old times past.

“Once,” said she, “I thought I would have been in your company. We used to play together. But I do not love such things. We can have no happiness together this afternoon, unless you will agree to have a meeting.”

To this they readily consented; and as one was pious but herself, she had

duties to perform. She read a portion of Scripture, and then conversed with them about dying, and about sin, and Christ, and repentance, and eternity. Then she prayed with them, beseeching the Lord to bless that privilege to every soul present, and prepare them all for death and judgment.

That was a very profitable meeting. Miss B. who was one of the company, from that time became serious, and the Lord in mercy blest little Harriet's conversation and prayer to the conversion of her soul. She became a truly devoted Christian.

Harriet was often quite fearful of herself. She feared she should lose her relish for religion, and depart from the feet of her Saviour, and sink back into a state of stupid coldness, and indulge in the follies of the world. Hence she would often request Christians to pray for her, that she might be kept from thus grieving the Holy Spirit, and wounding that precious cause which she so tenderly loved.

About this time her oldest sister became more decidedly serious, and expressed some

hope that her sins were forgiven. This fact gave Harriet great joy.

“Now, sister,” said she, “we will always walk together, and be happy, and do all the good we can. But we must not be too positive of our hope, for we may be deceived. Let us pray for each other, and try to live in the faith.”

Every instance of hopeful conversion in town, of which she heard, was a new source of joy, and gave new occasion for gratitude to God.

It was not many weeks after the great change in her feelings and views, when she began to express a wish to enjoy communion with Christians at the Lord’s table, and there celebrate her love to Him who had so freely shed his blood for the life of her soul.

There were two Churches in town, a Congregationalist and a Baptist. Her parents had always attended public worship with the former, and that was the one with which she wished to unite. She would often speak of the union that prevailed among the members

as one of the most beautiful sights on earth, and then express her anxiety to enjoy it with them.

When asked *why* she wished to join the Church, she answered — “There are only two classes of people in this world. The righteous are by themselves, and so are the wicked. I wish to live and die with the righteous.”

“Do you think,” said her mother, “that you are fit?”

“I trust,” said she, modestly, “that the Lord has changed my heart, and that I have repented of my sins, and believed in Jesus, and that I am washed in his blood. Is any thing more necessary?”

She was then asked if she thought the Church would receive so young a person?

Her reply was, — “When Christ invites me to come, can any disciple turn me away? Christ has said all things are ready, and if he is ready to receive me, why should not the Church be ready?”

Soon after this, a meeting was appointed to

ascertain who wished to become members. She attended, and took her seat among the candidates. The minister, Mr. W. inquired of her if she wished to offer herself for admission. She replied that she felt it to be her duty; and then rose, and, of her own accord, took her stand on a seat in the pew, and gave a particular account of her religious exercises. She did it with great modesty, but without being in the least daunted.

You know, my dear H. that in Baptist Churches it is required of all who come forward to be members and join the Church, to give before the whole Church an account of their religious experience, so that all can judge for themselves, whether there has been a true work of grace in their hearts. This is a very good practice, and I hope will never be laid aside. In most of the Congregationalist Churches, the same thing is practised. But in some, they have a Committee who examine the candidates, and say whether they shall be admitted.

The Congregationalist Church in Newport,

however, had the same rule as the Baptists, and that is the reason why little Harriet stood up on the seat and told her own experience, and then was questioned by any member of the Church who chose, about her views and feelings.

Mr. N. asked her if she thought she was a great sinner, before she found comfort in Christ?

“I did,” said she, “one of the greatest.”

He then said, “If you think you was such a sinner, what do you think of me, and others who are older?”

“I hope,” she replied, “that none of you are so great sinners as myself.”

The examination was perfectly satisfactory. Many old saints wept as they heard the simple narrative of her conviction, repentance and faith, and especially when they heard her lay so much stress, as she did, on confidence in Christ alone for salvation. Every one was fully prepared to receive her, and it was voted that she should be admitted to communion.

After her return that evening, she was exceedingly tranquil and solemn. She conversed very affectionately with her father, renewing her earnest request, that if he had any religion, to make it known to the world, and let his light shine.

“Christ,” she remarked, “has commanded his disciples all to take up their cross and follow him ; and one of his apostles has said, ‘Come ye out and be separate.’ But, dear father, if you have no hope, it is time you had. Will you not search and see?”

These remarks affected him considerably at the time ; but since the death of his beloved Harriet, he has thought of them more seriously. I do not know, however, whether he has yet made a profession of religion.

The first time that she enjoyed the privilege of communion with the Church, was her a precious season. She often spoke it afterwards, as one of the happiest hours of her life. She seemed really to discern body and blood of her Saviour. She distinctly understood the meaning of the

nance, and she attended to it in *remembrance* of Jesus. What a beautiful precept is that about the Lord's Supper!—Our Saviour Christ commanded his followers, "Do this in remembrance of me." How precious are his commands to all who love him! They delight to think of his love in dying for them; and they recollect most affectionately, the time when he gave this precept,—just before he was betrayed by Judas, and then crucified on the cross by wicked men!

Harriet, however, was a great reader of the Bible. That blessed Book was her constant companion. One morning, as her father went to his barn quite early, he found her reading the Bible in a retired part of the wood-shed, and asked her why she was there so early, reading in the cold?

"Because," said she, "the children make so much noise in the house that I cannot understand what I read."

Not long after this, about the middle of the forenoon, she suddenly laid down her work, and retired to her chamber, where she

afflicted, she considered the whole as sent upon her because of sin, and would often say she knew the particular sin for which God was punishing her.

If she had said any thing in a light or idle manner, she was almost immediately sensible of it, and showed her repentance by confessing her wrong, and then retiring to pray that the Lord would forgive her, and grant her grace to preserve her from ever being guilty of the same sin.

It was daily the occasion of her grief that she did not live more holy. "Jesus," she would say, "lived without sin; why cannot I? O what a depraved heart I have. I wonder the Lord lets me live. I do nothing right."

LETTER VII.

HARRIET LAMENTS HER SINFUL HEART.

“Dear Saviour, steep this rock of mine
In thine own crimson sea;
None but a bath of blood divine
Can melt the flint away.”

You have seen, my dear little friend, how happy Harriet was during the progress of the revival. She was anxious for the conversion of souls, and feared the Spirit would depart from the town, and leave great numbers in their sins.

You can therefore imagine what were her feelings when she saw the work of God declining. She said she feared it was because her prayers had not been more constant.

One day, as she was lamenting the state of things, and saying she could not endure the thought that the good work should stop, and no more souls be saved, a professor of religion who was present remarked, “Why, Harriet, we cannot expect to have a revival

always. God has a right to stop it when pleases."

"I know," she replied, "that God has *right* to call away his Spirit at any time; but *would* he do it if Christians should love and pray as they ought? He promises to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. Would he not, then, let his Spirit *stay* with them that they ask him?"

That professor has often confessed that he never felt a keener reproof.

Harriet frequently complained of the hardness of her heart, and wondered how it could be so after what she had known and felt of the love of God, and the joys of his religion. When others thought she lived near to God and was an example to older Christians, she used to bewail her forgetfulness of duty, and her departures from the spirit of true piety. She dreaded the thought of going back into the world, and living in the neglect of God's commandments.

She saw others, who had appeared, during the revival, to be much engaged, becom

cold and stupid, and was much distressed about it. At such times she would ask her mother if Christians *could not* live in the enjoyment of religion at one time as well as another?

- I believe, however, that she did herself lose a part of the fervour of her zeal, and for some months *feel* less and *say* less than before upon religious subjects. Still she continued the practice of prayer, and reading the word of God. She still preferred Christian society to all others, and loved to attend public worship. The Sabbath was still the sweetest day of the week, and sin was an evil which she never ceased to dread.

She was, notwithstanding, considerably backslidden *in heart*, and she was aware of it and confessed it. But no one reproved her for it, because all around her were sensible that she lived better than they did. Many have said that they never looked at her without feeling rebuked for their own departures from God!

She would often say, "My prayers are so

cold and stupid, that I fear the Lord does not regard them."

She mourned over her want of conformity to God, and thought she was the most ungrateful creature in the world, to follow her Saviour so far off.

But in the midst of all her anxiety and mourning, she was never heard to express a single doubt about her interest in Christ. Her hope remained firm, and she often said she thought Christians did a great deal of harm by saying so much about their doubts and fears.

"*Christ,*" said she, "is my Saviour. If I look into myself for any ground of confidence, I am disappointed. Jesus is the foundation of my hope. I know I love him, and trust my soul in his hands. Why should I doubt that he loves me? He came into the world to save the chief of sinners."

Still the hardness of her heart troubled her. Being asked what made her think her heart was so hard, she replied, "Once, when I read about the sufferings of Jesus, I used

to weep, I could not help weeping. But now, when I read the same, I do not feel so much. When any body died, it used to affect me more than it does now. And I am afraid I do not feel so anxious for sinners as I once did. Last year I could not think of them without thinking where they were going to, and almost always I warned them of their danger ; but I am now very different."

Singing was with her a favourite exercise, and her friends could generally tell what was the state of her feelings, both by the words and the tunes which she sung. A little book which she had, called "Songs of Zion," contained many hymns which she loved, and committed to memory. The following verse she would often sing with great animation :—

" O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free ;
A heart to always feel thy blood,
So freely spilt for me."

Harriet loved and respected her pastor, and when he was dismissed by his people, his removal was the cause of much sorrow to her young heart.

“I loved him too well,” she said, “and I hope this will teach me not to set my affections again on any thing in this world, for I am sure to be disappointed.”

Some difficulties existed in the Church, which disturbed its harmony, and showed that the spirit of love did not prevail as at the time when she made a profession of religion. This grieved her exceedingly, and she hardly knew how to account for it in a consistency with the Christian character.

“How can this be?” she would say; “are these the people who once appeared to love each other so much, and who were so much engaged to promote each other’s comfort? How can *Christians* quarrel, and talk hard about one another?”

This, I believe, was about three or four years after the revival — perhaps early in the year 1823.

So much was she distressed about these troubles in the Church, that she could not rest. She spent whole hours alone, mourn-

ing over them, and praying that the Lord would remove them, and restore peace.

At these times, when any thing was said upon the unhappy subject, she would remark, "Jesus never changes. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."



LETTER VIII.

HAPPY DEATH OF HARRIET.

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there."

MY DEAR H—,

I have not a great deal more to say about this excellent little girl. I presume you are well convinced that she was a good Christian.

The last meeting which she ever attended on earth, was a conference in the Baptist Society. When she returned, she appeared to be much animated.

Some one inquired the occasion of her joy.

She replied, "I have enjoyed this meeting much. It seems as if the spirit of religion happily prevails in the hearts of the people."

In the course of that week, one of her sisters, younger than herself, whose name, I believe, was Sarah, was taken suddenly ill of the throat distemper, and after four days of great suffering, death took her home to eternity.

Harriet felt this affliction very severely, as her sister was uncommonly dear to her, but she had a great share of Christian fortitude and resignation.

Seeing some of the family weeping immoderately, she said to them, "You are doing wrong. God has taken only what he gave, and we ought to say, '*Blessed be the name of the Lord.*' If you are not reconciled, you may have more afflictions. God may see fit to take more of us away. '*Whom he loveth he chasteneth,*' and we ought not to weep. If it is the Lord's will, we ought to be willing to part with all our friends."

The next Sabbath she was alone in her chamber nearly all the day, occupied in reading, meditation and prayer. In the evening she complained of being unwell.

“O Harriet,” said her mother, with anguish of heart, “what shall I do if you too should be taken away?”

The dear little girl looked up with sweet composure, and said, “Dear Mother, don’t you ever mourn for me.”

The next morning, when she rose, she said she had not slept any during the night.

Her mother discovered that the throat distemper, that fatal disease, had seized her, and manifested great concern. Harriet perceived her mother’s alarm, and tried to sooth her feelings, by repeating what she had before said, “Don’t you ever mourn for me.”

Before night her speech failed, the disorder increased, and she was told that she could not live. This, however, did not alarm her. No Christian was ever more calm and composed.

Occasionally afterwards she was able to

articulate a few words at a time. Some one inquired, "Harriet, has death any terror to you?"

"O no," she answered, "death has no terror at all."

"Is Christ still precious?"

"Yes, more lovely than ever."

She inquired several times if it was a sin to desire to get well; but she never expressed one wish to recover. On the contrary, she seemed altogether resigned. Her sufferings were exceedingly severe, but not a complaint escaped her lips. During her illness she was not heard either to groan or sigh. She was able to utter but a few words, and those were chiefly about Jesus and heaven. All her own pains, and even the prospect of death did not affect her so much as to see her friends grieving and weeping on her account.

On Tuesday Mr. W. called to see her, but she was not able to converse with him. All she could say was, that Jesus continued to be precious, and that her hope in him remained unshaken.

The disease progressed in its ravages, and it was evident that her end was not far distant. Her countenance, however, was lighted up with a serene smile, which showed how happy she was in view of eternity.

The next morning her distress was greatly increased. She rose up suddenly in bed, and by great effort, succeeded in saying, "Mother!" Scarcely had her mother reached the side of her bed, when she had a severe, but momentary struggle, and was gone.

"She sleeps in Jesus, and is blest,
How sweet her slumbers are!
From suffering and from sin releas'd,
And freed from every snare."

Her father was absent at that time, on a journey, and knew nothing of what was passing at home. Her mother, and sisters, and friends stood, for a few moments, in deep agony, around her body, as it grew paler and paler, hardly realizing that the scene could be real, and then retired to weep alone. But they could not—they did not mourn as they would if she had died without hope. They

doubted not that her purified spirit had gone to a holier and happier world, to dwell with that Jesus whom she had so tenderly loved, and so faithfully obeyed.

She died Sept. 19, 1823, aged a few days over thirteen years.

Her father did not return till after she had been buried some days. His grief was keen and almost inconsolable. He felt that he must again see his beloved Harriet. Early in the morning he visited the place where she lay sleeping, had her grave opened, and gazed for the last time on her pale, but almost unaltered features.

LETTER IX.

SERMON ON HER DEATH.

“Thou art gone to the grave! but we will not deplore thee,
Whose God was thy ransom, thy guardian and guide;
He gave thee, he took thee, and he will restore thee,
And death has no sting, for the Saviour has died.”


MY DEAR H—,

I have not much more to say about little Harriet. No doubt you have felt considerable interest in her case, and would be glad to hear something further, especially in reference to her religious character. But I believe I have stated all that it is important for you to know. It is true she said a great many good things which her friends delight to remember, but which I have not related, because I did not think it desirable to print any thing which might not be particularly profitable. Besides, I do not consider it as a good practice to tell every thing that children, even very good children say. Parents often appear very weak and simple in telling

almost every body what their little children have said, as if their expressions were remarkable, and as if no other children could say such wonderful things. It is well enough for them to *remember* these expressions, but it is not often wise to *repeat* them to others.

Perhaps you will say, "But Harriet is now dead, and gone to Heaven. Surely it cannot hurt *her*, if you should tell me something more about her. She will not *now* be proud, if you should say ever so much."

True, my dear niece, but I am not certain that it would be calculated to do *you* any good. I recollect when I was quite young, I was exceedingly fond of reading stories about good children, how they lived and how they died. I loved them, and wished to be thought as good as they, so that if I should die, a little book might be written about me, in praise of my goodness, and telling all the world what good words I used to speak. Now you can easily see that my feelings were very selfish. I wished to be religious so as *to be praised* for my religion. Let me ask if



you have never had any such feeling? And while you have been reading these letters, have you not indulged the secret wish that somebody might hereafter write an account of your life and religious experience, as I have of Harriet's? That is a bad motive, and God cannot approve it. I presume the thought never entered into her head that any one would write a syllable about her life or death, and consequently she never spoke a word, or performed an action, with the hope that people would think well of her after death. She loved the Saviour, and her Bible, and the souls of all children, and what she spoke proceeded from a very sincere heart. And yet she had such views of her own imperfections and sinfulness, that she thought nothing which she said or did was good. She, therefore, I am confident, if she could speak to me from Heaven, would not consent to my relating any more of the expressions which fell from what she often called, her "polluted lips."

About four months after her death, when

the severest paroxysm of her parents' grief had partially subsided, her father requested the Rev. Mr. Person, the worthy minister of the Baptist Church, in Newport, to preach a funeral discourse from a particular text. The passage you will find in 2 Kings, iv. 26. "*Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.*" I wish you would turn to this chapter and read it through. You will there find the history of a little child that died, and how its mother conducted on the occasion. The preacher consented to the wish of Mr. Dow, and his sermon was printed. A copy now lies before me, and I have just read it with much satisfaction, for I can well conceive how admirably it was adapted to instruct and comfort the mourning friends. It contains only a few words about Harriet, and for that reason I like it the better. He might have said much about her deep piety and her holy example. But he felt that his business was chiefly with the living. All who heard him knew how pious she was, and

therefore did not need to be told of her excellencies. They needed rather to be admonished of their own remissness in duty, and want of preparation to follow her.

As you probably may never have seen this sermon, I will give you, in a few words, an outline of it.

The introduction contains a sketch of the narrative in connexion with the text, and shows the propriety of our going to God, in our afflictions, for the necessary comfort. As the afflicted woman at Shunem, when her little son was dead, went to Elisha, the prophet of the Most High God, for counsel and consolation, so should we, when tried and distressed, repair to Jesus, the greatest and best prophet, that we may find the needed relief and succour. He is able to make up our losses, or to give us strength to endure them with patient resignation.

The main topic which the preacher illustrates and enforces, is, that "under all the afflictions of this life, *it is well* with true believers in Christ." The correctness of

this sentiment he shows by various considerations.

1. There is a suitableness in Jesus for every condition in which his disciples can be placed. There is in him a tenderness to sympathize with them, and an ability to alleviate all their woes.

2. He is their affectionate and faithful friend,—the same in prosperity and adversity. His love is ardent, invincible, and unchanging.

3. All their afflictions contribute to their spiritual and eternal good. They work out the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and serve to increase the weight of glory which is to be enjoyed in another world.

4. The promises of God are decidedly in favour of his afflicted saints. Nothing can essentially harm them — nothing can separate them from the love of God. His grace is sufficient for them, and Christ has gone to prepare a place for their eternal residence.

5. Numerous examples found in Scripture show that *it is well* with believers under af-

ictions. Among the instances named, are ob, Stephen, and Paul and Silas.

After some judicious reflections upon the interest which good men feel in the welfare of others, and especially upon the value of Christian faith, in its happy influence to render us patient and submissive under the correcting hand of God, the preacher proceeds to address the mourning family. His remarks are tender and consoling, as well as faithful.

The last paragraph of the Sermon I will here transcribe for your particular benefit.

“The providence of God, which has caused us to assemble this evening, is a loud call to the youth in this neighbourhood. God has made a breach in your circle; he has taken a valuable member from your society; and although she did not join with you in your lightness and vanity, you could not but respect and love her. It is probable she often wept at your follies and sins, that she reproved you for them, and prayed for your immortal souls. But she has now bid farewell to parents and

sisters,— farewell to her youthful friends and to the world. Though she is dead yet she speaketh, and her language is, ‘ My youthful friends, prepare to follow me.’ Her *example* yet lives, and O, that you might imitate it. She chose the Lord for her portion while young ; she did not delay till old age. O, if she had delayed to be as old as some of you are, where now would have been her soul? Must it not have been in torment, and there remained forever. And what would have been your condition, if God had called *you*, instead of *her*, into the eternal world? Must you not have lifted up your eyes in sorrow, even in hell, with the rich man whom Christ mentions in the 16th chapter of Luke? Let not this solemn call pass you by unheeded; for the next whom God may summon into the eternal state, may be your poor soul. Boast not of your youth, as if it were any safeguard against death. How blooming in youth was that dear girl whose sudden death is the occasion of this address to you? Your beauty and activity may soon wither like the

flower that is cut down. The winding-sheet, the coffin and the grave will be all that your bodies will need. But O, your souls will never die! They must exist in endless joy, or linger in eternal wo. Now be entreated to remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Be entreated to think on your latter end, and prepare to meet your God and Judge in peace."

Whether any of the dear young people regarded that solemn warning, and thus became "*wise unto salvation,*" I am not able to say. But this I know, that a time is coming when they will be called to account for its effect upon their minds, and we shall know whether it was to them "*a savour of life unto life,*" or "*of death unto death.*" God is just, and he will not allow his ministers to preach in vain. If their faithful invitations and warnings do not soften the hearts of youth and children, they generally harden them, and thus serve to show more fully the holiness of God in punishing their aggravated

guilt. O, my dear H., I trust you do not permit such serious truths to harden your heart, and render more awful the account which you are soon to give at the judgment-seat of Christ. Pray to the Lord that every sermon which you hear may do you good, and bring you nearer and nearer to the kingdom of heaven.

“With humble heart and tongue,
My God, to thee I pray;
O make me learn, whilst I am young,
How I may cleanse my way.”

LETTER X.

HOW HARRIET SAW HER OWN HEART.

“Oh! what is life?—’Tis like a flower
 That blossoms—and is gone:
 It flourishes its little hour,
 With all its beauty on:
 Death comes—and like a wintry day,
 It cuts the lovely flower away.

“Oh! what is life?—’Tis like the bow
 That glistens in the sky:
 We love to see its colours glow;
 But while we look, they die:
 Life fails as soon;—to-day ’tis here—
 To morrow it may disappear.

“Lord, what is life? If spent with thee,
 In humble praise and prayer,
 How long or short our life may be,
 We feel no anxious care:
 Though life depart, our joys shall last
 When life and all its joys are past.”

MY DEAR H——,

In the account which I have given you of little Harriet’s religious experience, you doubtless remember she thought and said a great deal about her sinfulness, and her fear that her soul would never be saved. I pre-

sume you will not think that these views and feelings were unnecessary. There are many people in the world who suppose that such little children have no occasion to be alarmed and repent and become pious, in order to be good and happy. But they are such as know very little about their own hearts, or the evil of sin, or the true relation in which we all stand to our Maker, and therefore their opinions on such subjects are not very likely to be right. You, I trust, have some knowledge on these subjects, and consequently you understand why Harriet was so much distressed about her sins and the state of her soul. No one had said any thing to frighten her. But she had a tender conscience, which had not become hard and unfeeling under the influence of a wicked life; and she had read her Bible with great seriousness; and she had heard her mother and minister say many solemn things about God, and Christ, and heaven, and hell, much of which she had treasured up in her heart. Besides, the Holy Spirit secretly and silently operated on her

mind, leading her to think of death, judgment, and eternity. Thus she was led along gradually to see herself as she really was ; and when she had a discovery of the vileness of her heart, do you think all the world could have persuaded her to believe that she was not a sinner, or that she had no occasion to be alarmed, or that she did not need a Saviour ?

It is a truth, my little friend, that children are sinners. Some are more wicked than others ; but the very best are guilty of much sin. Probably not one child in a thousand is so harmless and amiable, and so fearful of doing wrong, as was Harriet previous to her conversion. But she found that she had much to repent of, and often said that she "had done nothing right." She discovered that her thoughts and feelings had many times been very wicked, when her outward conduct was thought to be quite good. Though she seldom displeased her parents, or any of her fellow creatures, yet she knew that she had

offended God, and she mourned over her sin with many sighs and tears.

I am satisfied, therefore, that I read safely when I say, that if she was a sinner, that all other children are sinners. If she needs repentance, then do all others need it. She thought herself "one of the greatest sinners." What, then, is the sinfulness of multitudes who have wandered farther from God, in their very early life, than ever she did?

O that all little children would become sensible how they have sinned against God. It requires them to love him with all their hearts. But they do not obey this requirement. They love something in this world better than him, and that is sin.

God commands them to honour their fathers and their mother. But most children in some way or other, are guilty of disobedience in this respect. Even if they say nothing or do nothing that can be called disrespectful to their parents, yet they often *think* and *judge* in such a manner in reference to them as to disobey their commands, that God, who sees

heart, considers them as guilty of great sin. Now if your mother tells you to do a thing, you may go and do it faithfully so as to satisfy *her*, and yet you may feel *inwardly* displeased that she required it of you, and obey her only because you fear her, or because you dislike to be called a disobedient child. God looks into your mind and knows perfectly what feelings you have, and as he sees that *inward displeasure*, he declares that your heart is not right, and marks it in his book.

He requires all to remember and keep holy the Sabbath day. Very few children obey this command. They devote it more to play, or some trifling pursuit, than to the service and glory of their Creator. Probably you can recollect a great many instances in which you have violated that holy day. Do you not think it was very sinful?

I might mention many other commands which little children violate. But it is unnecessary. They are sinners against God, and must repent of their sins, or they cannot

be happy after death. Having offended God, their Heavenly Father, they ought to be sorry for their wrong, and confess their sins to him, and pray for his pardoning mercy.

And it is a delightful thought that God is ready to forgive. He has sent his Son to bleed and die for us ; and now if any sinners, young or old, will repent and come to Christ, believing on his name, they shall be saved forever. Harriet found forgiveness in this way. She mourned over her sins with a broken heart, and she prayed night and day for pardon, and she obtained it to the joy of her soul. O that all children would repent as she did, then would the Lord have mercy on them and save their souls.

But some children are apt to say, "We are too young to become religious. When we grow up, we will think of these things."

If I could have an opportunity to talk a little while with such children, I would address them very affectionately :—

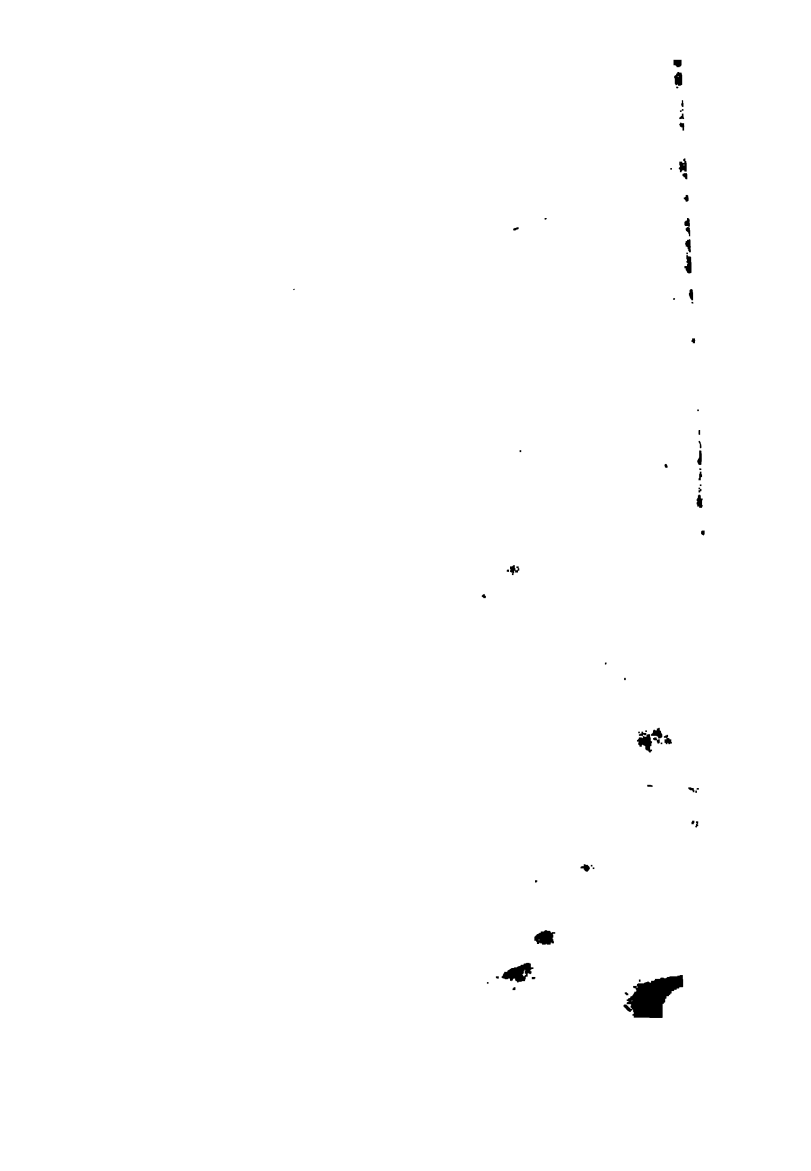
My dear young Friends,—

Have you ever thought seriously of what you say, when you make *such* an apology for delaying to attend to the concerns of your souls? You say you are "*too young* to become religious." Is this true? Little Harriet found at the age of eight years, that she was not too young to think of her soul, and of its prospects for eternity. She lamented that she had lived so long impenitent and unbelieving, and felt that she was guilty before God for not repenting at a much earlier period. Her *sins* were not greater than yours. Her *danger* was no greater, and it would have been as safe for her as it can be for you, to delay attention to religion. Are you too young to obey God? Too young to be humble and holy before him? Too young to do right? On the supposition that you may live many years in the enjoyment of health and reason, is it right for you to live in sin, and treat God with such neglect? Is it prudent for you to let your heart grow harder, and to let your sins multiply upon

your soul, to such an extent, that repentance will necessarily be a hundred-fold more difficult and painful? Because you feel a strong hope that God may keep you alive and and clothe you, and give you strength and opportunity to do right, you resolve that you will pursue just the course that will disappoint him, and provoke his anger to the utmost. Is not this rash as well as wicked? O, can you hope that he will ever have mercy upon you, unless you now turn to him and seek him with all your heart? Your whole life belongs to him, and you cannot withdraw it, without contracting an awful amount of guilt. Say not, therefore, that you are ‘*young* to become religious.’ God will hold you to a solemn account for such a remark.

But you promise that *when you grow up* you will attend to this subject. Suppose Harriet had made such a promise, and set it down upon it, where would she have appeared when called so suddenly into Eternity? A great many have made a similar promise, but God has not permitted them to grow

as they expected. Children are laid in the grave every day, and you may soon follow them. God says to you, "*Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*" And he says in another place, "*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*" Yes, my dear young friends, you are required to attend to your souls *now*. Your only safe course is *now* to repent of your sins, and turn to God with all your heart. *Now* break off from every evil course, and love and serve the Lord. Now receive Jesus as your Saviour, Friend, and Guide. Thus you will obtain true happiness in this life, and the hope of eternal joys in the world to come. Then would you be prepared to die. You would not be unwilling to leave the world, nor afraid to enter Eternity. Death would be easy and delightful—a mere passing out of this sinful, sorrowful world, into another that is pure, and felicitous, and everlasting. There you would meet Harriet, and thousands of other little children whose souls have been sanctified by





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